

International Journal of Culture and Religious Studies

(IJCRS)

**Harmonizing Hearts and Minds: Reenacting the Role of
Music in Holistic Education in Ghana**



Harmonizing Hearts and Minds: Reenacting the Role of Music in Holistic Education in Ghana



Mawusi Foster Eddison

E. P. College of Education, Bimbilla

<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-5265-5789>

Accepted: 24th Aug, 2026, Received in Revised Form: 9th Sep, 2026, Published: 21st Sep, 2026

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the systematic marginalisation of music within contemporary, exam-driven formal instructional frameworks in Ghana, which heavily prioritise cognitive development at the expense of affective, social, and spiritual formation. The paper seeks to explore the potential reintegration of music as a central pedagogical and theological instrument to facilitate holistic education and learner development.

Methodology: The study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design situated within a conceptual analytical framework. It draws upon biblical foundations, Ghanaian socio-historical contexts, and established psychological theories, specifically Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Data are gathered by analysing documentary sources and relevant scholarly literature, alongside a conceptual curricular audit executed across the Basic, Secondary, and Tertiary teacher-training levels.

Findings: The structural curricular audit reveals significant systemic gaps, including the acute marginalisation of indigenous musical traditions, severe deprivation of instructional resources, and insufficient formal training parameters for music educators across all educational tiers. These multi-dimensional deficiencies are inextricably linked to broader systemic constraints and an overemphasis on high-stakes testing that limit cognitive enrichment, emotional development, cultural identity, and spiritual grounding in contemporary Ghanaian school environments.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy, and Practice: The study offers a distinct, actionable, four-fold strategic framework designed for educational stakeholders, policymakers, and mission-based institutions. This framework provides a practical blueprint for systemic curriculum integration, the structural revitalisation of chapel-based musical practice, targeted professional development models for teachers, and the explicit reclamation of Ghana's sacred soundscape as an essential tool for whole-person formation.

Keywords: *Holistic Education, Music Pedagogy, Ghanaian Curricula, Spiritual Formation, Indigenous Hymnody*

Introduction

Modern educational environments increasingly prioritise quantifiable intellectual outputs, orienting curricula toward global market competition and high-stakes examinations (Shek, Chau & Lee, 2025; Carney, 2022). Within this hyper-cognitive paradigm, education risks narrowing its scope to mere technical utility, often sidelining the cultivation of emotional intelligence, ethical responsibility, and spiritual grounding in learners (Carney, 2022; WHO, 2022). As schools pursue academic excellence, there is a growing call within educational discourse to critically reassess the kind of learners being formed and the broader purposes of education in society (Taguma & Frid, 2024). Society does not merely require academically capable individuals; it demands emotionally intelligent, ethically responsible, and socially grounded citizens capable of navigating complex global realities (Richerme, 2022; WHO, 2022).

Education, in its truest sense, must go beyond intellectual stimulation. It must engage the whole person, shaping cognition, character, values, and identity formation (Carney, 2022). This is the essence of holistic education, an approach that integrates the cognitive, emotional, social, and moral dimensions of learning into a unified developmental framework (Shek, Chau & Lee, 2025). Contemporary educational reform agendas increasingly emphasise whole-person development as essential for sustainable human and societal flourishing (Carney, 2022; Shek, Chau & Lee, 2025). Achieving such systemic integration requires educational frameworks that leverage cross-disciplinary tools capable of engaging the human experience at its deepest levels, including arts-based and culturally embedded pedagogies (Eisner, 2003).

Music serves as a potent structural and transformative educational vehicle. It operates not merely as an aesthetic distraction, entertainment, or extracurricular pastime, but as a cognitive scaffold, a repository of cultural memory, and a medium for emotional and moral development (Carney, 2022). Research in music education consistently demonstrates its capacity to enhance memory, attention, emotional regulation, and social cohesion among learners (Hallam, 2010; Kraus & White-Schwoch, 2020). Within the context of Christian and mission-based institutions, particularly in African settings, music has historically functioned as a core mechanism for identity formation, faith expression, and communal cohesion (Nketia, 1974; Carney, 2022).

This study examines the systematic erosion of music's role within the contemporary Ghanaian educational pipeline, where increased emphasis on examinable subjects has marginalised creative and expressive disciplines (Shek, Chau & Lee, 2025; Taguma & Frid, 2024). The discussion establishes its biblical and historical precedents, analyses current structural gaps across educational levels, and reviews empirical evidence on its developmental benefits. The paper ultimately argues for the re-centring of music as a cornerstone of holistic formation in Ghanaian schools (Carney, 2022; Hallam, 2010).

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the systematic marginalisation of music within the contemporary, exam-driven Ghanaian educational pipeline and to advocate for its strategic reintegration as a central pedagogical and theological tool for whole-person development. It seeks to counter the hyper-cognitive paradigm of modern educational reforms that prioritise quantifiable intellectual outputs at the expense of a learner's emotional intelligence, ethical responsibility, and spiritual grounding. Ultimately, the study aims to provide educational stakeholders and mission-based institutions with a clear, actionable roadmap to restore music to its rightful place as a cornerstone of holistic formation in Ghanaian schools.

Objectives of the Study

To achieve its overarching purpose, the study addresses the following specific research objectives:

- To evaluate the scriptural and historical foundations of musical pedagogy.
- To conduct a comprehensive structural audit of the current state of music education across the Basic, Secondary, and Tertiary teacher-training levels in Ghana.
- To analyse the empirical impact of music on the four core domains of holistic student development.
- To formulate a strategic, four-core actionable framework

Methodology

This study utilises a qualitative approach grounded in institutional and curriculum analysis. It adopts a qualitative descriptive research design framed within a conceptual analytical framework. This approach allows for a critical, multi-dimensional exploration of how music functions as a transformative educational vehicle. The methodology relies heavily on secondary data obtained through an extensive desk study review. Data collection involved gathering documentary sources, national curriculum documents, and relevant empirical, psychological, and ethnomusicological scholarly literature. The study aligns empirical data against established psychological frameworks, principally Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, as well as biblical principles of growth (such as Luke 2:52). A systematic review was executed across the contemporary Ghanaian educational pipeline (Kindergarten through Tertiary teacher-training Colleges of Education) to isolate structural deficits, faculty inconsistencies, resource deprivation, and the effects of compressed subject pairings.

Theoretical and Biblical Foundations

a) Scriptural Precedents of Musical Pedagogy

Throughout Judeo-Christian scripture, music is framed as a divine instrument for communal remembrance, didactic instruction, and spiritual discipline. It functions as a mechanism to encode history, shape faith, and reinforce collective identity.

- **Communal Remembrance and Identity:** In Exodus 15:20-21(NRSV), Miriam's leading of the Israelites in a triumphant song of deliverance acts as a primary historical register. This moment of collective singing solidifies their shared identity as a liberated people and celebrates God's saving power.
- **Therapeutic and Affective Regulation:** The narrative in 1 Samuel 16:23 (NRSV) demonstrates the capacity of melodic and harmonic structures to induce psychological and spiritual homeostasis. David's harp playing brings peace to King Saul, revealing how melody can become a vessel of divine comfort and emotional healing.
- **Didactic and Mutual Edification:** In the New Testament, the Pauline corpus explicitly identifies song as an instructional methodology. Writing to the early Church, the apostle Paul commands in Colossians 3:16 (NRSV):

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

Here, singing is positioned not just as an act of praise, but as an active educational medium through which theological tenets are externalised, shared, and mutually reinforced within the community.

- **Theological Expression:** The Book of Psalms stands as an ancient musical and theological textbook of faith. By articulating the full spectrum of human experience—including lament, praise, protest, justice, trust, and hope- it serves to structure human understanding of the divine and guide the soul's response to life.

Taken together, these scriptural witnesses affirm that music is not an optional or peripheral addition to the life of faith; it is integral to the education of the heart, the nurturing of communal memory, and the cultivation of a vibrant, enduring spirituality.

b) Socio-Historical Context of Music Education in Ghana

Historically, music held an indispensable place within the informal educational structures of indigenous Ghanaian societies. It was seamlessly embedded within daily life and community learning to transmit values, history, communal identity, and moral instruction across generations through oral traditions, festivals, initiation rites, and storytelling. As musicologist J. H. Kwabena Nketia (1974) establishes, traditional music was never isolated as a discrete aesthetic object but

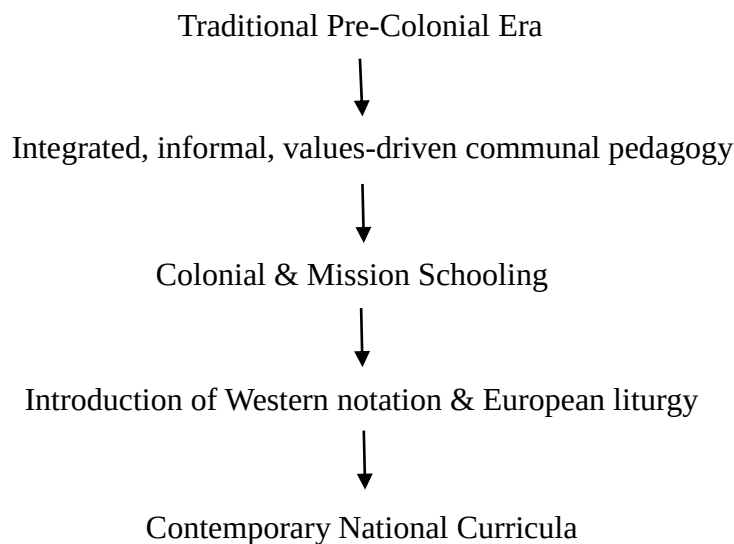
was functionally integrated into the social fabric. In *Representing African Music*, Kofi Agawu (2003) emphasises this intersectional reality, noting that African music is profoundly performative and pedagogical, an epistemological mode of knowing and expressing the world.

The introduction of formal Western schooling during the colonial period by European Christian missions significantly transformed Ghana's indigenous educational and musical landscape. Mission schools introduced structured classroom instruction, staff notation, tonic sol-fa systems, Western music theory, and European choral traditions, which became the dominant framework for music education. While these developments provided valuable pedagogical tools, they simultaneously privileged European musical aesthetics and liturgical practices, often marginalising indigenous musical traditions, oral transmission methods, and community-based learning systems (Dordzro, 2023; Addaquay, 2025). Contemporary scholars argue that music education in Ghana continues to reflect colonial legacies through the predominance of Western-oriented content and pedagogies, with indigenous musical knowledge occupying only a peripheral position within formal curricula (Dordzro, 2023). In response, post-independence educational reforms and recent curriculum frameworks have increasingly emphasised the decolonisation of education and the integration of indigenous knowledge systems as essential resources for culturally relevant, inclusive, and context-responsive learning (NaCCA, 2018). Such reforms seek to restore the place of indigenous cultural heritage, languages, artistic practices, and traditional pedagogies within Ghana's educational system while fostering learners' cultural identity and national development.

Consequently, the Ministry of Education (2019) now includes music as part of the Creative Arts curriculum at the basic level and as a component of the Performing Arts in Senior High schools. Music is also studied as a specialised academic discipline at the tertiary level within universities and Colleges of Education. However, as historical and contemporary assessments reveal, this institutional inclusion has largely remained nominal, as the contemporary system faces persistent operational challenges (Agordoh, 2005; Mensah, 2010).

Structural Analysis of Music in the Ghanaian Educational System

A critical audit of the current state of music education in Ghana reveals significant systemic gaps across the entire academic pipeline. The shift toward an exam-centric model has systematically diminished the priority of the arts.



Decolonisation policies vs. Deep structural deficits

i) Basic Education (Kindergarten to Junior High School)

At the foundational level, music is structurally integrated, but its execution remains highly limited:

- **Current Implementation:** Music is included primarily under the umbrella of the *Creative Arts* curriculum, especially at the early childhood and lower primary levels. Teachers frequently utilise folk songs, storytelling, rhymes, and call-and-response musical games to reinforce phonics, aid memorisation, deliver moral lessons, and maintain classroom engagement.
- **Identified Gaps:**
 - **Pedagogical Deficits:** The vast majority of basic school educators are generalists who lack formal training in music pedagogy or musical literacy. Recent evaluations highlight that teachers still struggle with the practical integration of creative arts due to gaps in their initial training (Adu-Agyem & Osei-Poku, 2021).
 - **Resource Deprivation:** Public and lower-income schools face severe shortages of basic musical instruments, specialised learning materials, and dedicated acoustic rooms.
 - **Assessment Failures:** Music is rarely subjected to meaningful, standardised assessments, which directly causes school administrators and parents to view it as a low-priority subject.

- Cultural Sidelineing: Indigenous content and local liturgical music traditions are frequently sidelined in favour of generic or Westernised childhood songs.

ii) Secondary Education (Senior High School)

At the secondary stage, the discipline undergoes severe narrowing:

- Current Implementation: Music is relegated to an elective subject available only to a small fraction of students enrolled in the Visual Arts or General Arts tracks. The official Ghana Education Service (GES) curriculum covers basic music theory, African music, and performance practices. In selected mission or private schools with deep-seated institutional traditions, student choirs, bands, and music clubs remain active during school worship and ceremonial events.
- Identified Gaps:
 - Academic Marginalisation: Music suffers from a poor societal perception, frequently labelled as a "non-academic" or unviable career track, which discourages student enrollment. This ongoing trend shows music education fighting for survival in secondary schools due to systemic underfunding and low social prestige (Essel & Amissah, 2022).
 - Faculty Inconsistencies: If a senior high school lacks a specialized music teacher, the elective course is completely omitted, creating geographic and economic disparities in student access.
 - Liturgical Passivity: Despite active choirs in some schools, general school worship services are frequently repetitive and musically passive, failing to expose the broader student body to structured musical learning.
 - Underutilised Heritage: The rich Ghanaian Christian musical heritage, such as indigenous hymns, classic Ghanaian choral art music, and local gospel forms, is largely underutilised or completely absent from formal school spaces.

iii) Tertiary Level (Colleges of Education)

The institutional gaps culminate at the teacher-training level, which directly affects the entire basic school system:

- Current Implementation: Music features within the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) curriculum for teacher trainees preparing for Early Childhood, Primary, and JHS tracks. Mission-founded colleges often sustain vibrant student choirs that anchor college events and chapel services.
- Identified Gaps:

- Curricular Dilution: Music does not exist as an independent, stand-alone course of study for general trainees. Instead, it is structurally paired with Physical Education into a single composite framework known as PEMD (Physical Education, Music, and Dance). Recent analyses of this integrated approach confirm that pairing these disparate subjects results in the direct neglect of musical literacy in favour of high-visibility physical activities (Flolu, Dzansi-McPalm & Awouemi, 207; Komabu & Dawson, 2024).
- Competency Deficiencies: Because instructional time is shared across multiple disciplines, teacher trainees frequently graduate without the practical confidence, notation-reading skills, or pedagogical competence required to teach music or integrate it into basic classrooms.
- Infrastructure Deficits: Many training colleges lack basic infrastructure, such as dedicated practice rooms, instruments, and libraries stocked with relevant African or classical music literature.
- Informal Worship Leadership: Training in worship leadership and chapel music management remains highly informal and inconsistent, relying on the personal interest of students rather than systematic institutional instruction.

iv) General Systemic Implications

Across all levels, mission and private schools tend to invest more resources into musical programming and choral ensembles than public institutions. While student interest in contemporary gospel music is growing, this interest is rarely harnessed for structured formal learning or deep formative development. Consequently, rich indigenous Christian musical traditions, such as *Kinaachon*, *Borborbor*, and specialised local language hymns, are at risk of being completely lost to the younger generation. Despite its proven benefits, music remains underutilised and deeply undervalued within the national education system.

Empirical Dimensions of Music in Holistic Formation

Holistic education demands the concurrent development of the whole human person: body, mind, and spirit. This philosophy is anchored in biblical models of growth, such as Luke 2:52, where Jesus' development embraced interconnected cognitive (wisdom), physical (stature), spiritual (favour with God), and social (favour with man) dimensions. Music serves as a unique multi-dimensional catalyst capable of driving growth across all four core domains simultaneously:

a) Cognitive Development

Music significantly sharpens cognitive capacity. Through its intrinsic rhythms, structural patterns, and mathematical relationships, music training enhances linguistic comprehension, memory retention, concentration, and spatial-temporal reasoning. Empirical research confirms

that children engaged in structured music instruction exhibit superior performance in language and literacy tests. Contemporary research using neuroimaging continues to show that learning music creates strong, transferable enhancements in auditory processing and executive functions (Habibi et al., 2022).

The complex task of reading notation and calculating rhythm supports abstract thinking and problem-solving skills closely mirrored in mathematical reasoning. Furthermore, neuroscience demonstrates that sustained musical training enhances working memory capacity and attentional control, providing students with executive functions that directly translate to broader academic success.

b) Affective and Emotional Development

Music operates as a profound emotional language, offering a non-verbal medium for expressing, processing, and regulating complex internal states such as anxiety, grief, hope, and joy. This emotional resonance makes music an effective tool for cultivating empathy, emotional literacy, and self-awareness. Recent systematic reviews establish that group-based music activities drastically reduce cortisol levels and alleviate feelings of isolation in adolescents (Garrido et al., 2020).

In both classroom and chapel settings, music provides a safe environment for students to process emotional stress, thereby improving psychological resilience and overall mental well-being. These affective qualities are highly critical for social-emotional learning, particularly during adolescent development.

c) Social and Communal Development

Music is an inherently communal art form. Participation in school choirs, instrumental bands, or traditional dance ensembles requires collective synchronisation, strict discipline, active listening, and mutual respect. These collaborative interactions teach essential social skills, including teamwork, shared responsibility, and interpersonal sensitivity. Studies on group music-making continue to reinforce how joint musical performance acts as a powerful catalyst for pro-social behaviour and interpersonal bonding among diverse student groups (Wolf et al., 2021).

By operating as a shared social experience, music fosters a deep sense of belonging, minimises alienation, and constructs a healthy group identity, encouraging students to see themselves as vital parts of a larger community.

d) Spiritual Development

Within value-based and Christian education, music acts as a direct channel for spiritual formation. It communicates profound theological truths in a manner that penetrates the human heart deeper than prose alone, making dogmatic concepts easier to internalise and remember. As highlighted in Colossians 3:16, the regular singing of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs has

long been a primary spiritual discipline for teaching faith and establishing long-term spiritual habits. Contemporary research confirms that singing historic and indigenous Christian music plays an indispensable role in maintaining local theological identities and nurturing personal resilience (Emielu, 2020; Agordoh, 2021).

Furthermore, integrating indigenous Christian musical expressions connects students simultaneously to their cultural roots and their faith heritage, preventing the fragmentation of their identity. In this manner, music transcends entertainment to become a formative discipline that nurtures reverence, gratitude, and a personal relationship with the Creator.

When heart and mind meet through music, learning transitions from the purely informational to the deeply transformational. Music harmonises the intellect and the soul, allowing students not only to understand truth cognitively, but to feel it, live it, and sing it.

Strategic Framework for Reenacting Music's Role

To reverse the decline of musical vitality in Ghanaian mission schools, where chapel choirs are under-resourced, instruments sit unused, and students remain passive observers during worship, educational leaders must move beyond symbolic gestures. Reenacting music's role demands deliberate, structural, and strategic reforms. The following four-fold actionable framework provides a roadmap for policymakers, administrators, chaplains, and community stakeholders:

a) Systemic Curriculum Integration

Music must be repositioned from a marginalised elective to a foundational tool across basic and secondary levels.

- **Cross-Curricular Synthesis:** Curriculum developers must intentionally embed music within core subjects such as Religious and Moral Education (RME), History, and Language Arts. Traditional folk songs should be used to teach historical narratives and moral values; classic hymns and scriptural songs should be utilised to enrich students' literary vocabulary and moral imagination. Recent curriculum reform debates in sub-Saharan Africa note that an integrated arts approach is more sustainable when coupled directly with humanities courses to bridge cultural divides (Ogunrinade, 2022).
- **Mnemonic Pedagogy:** Educational frameworks should provide explicit guidelines for using rhythmic and melodic structures to accelerate language acquisition, literacy, and memory retention in early childhood and primary classrooms.
- **Contextual Content:** Task curriculum designers with including diverse theological and cultural musical content that directly reflects both rich Ghanaian heritage and Christian ethical values.

b) Chapel Revitalisation and Liturgical Renewal

School chapels must be transformed from formulaic routines into vibrant, student-led centres of musical and spiritual formation.

- Musically Competent Leadership: Appoint chaplains, catechists, and spiritual leaders who possess demonstrated musical competence and understand how musical structures shape communal faith expressions.
- Active Student Ensembles: Formally establish, fund, and maintain student liturgical choirs, brass/orchestral bands, and contemporary worship teams. Students must be given the agency to lead school worship with creativity, reverence, and technical skill.
- Inclusive Liturgical Repertoire: Mandate a healthy balance of musical genres, combining classical Western hymns, contemporary gospel, and indigenous songs, ensuring that worship is experienced as both culturally authentic and spiritually edifying.

c) Professional Teacher Development

The pedagogical capacities of instructors must be reinforced across all levels.

- Professional Workshops: Incorporate music integration and basic worship leadership training into continuous professional development (CPD) modules and orientation programs for teachers entering mission-based schools. Recent teacher-efficacy studies show that brief, targeted workshops significantly lower an educator's anxiety toward implementing creative arts in the classroom (Mensah, 2021).
- Practical Pedagogical Tools: Provide educators with practical training workshops focused on using music for classroom management, emotional support, and spiritual encouragement.
- Interdepartmental Collaboration: Encourage cross-departmental collaboration, requiring arts educators and general humanities teachers to coordinate music for school-wide devotions, festivals, and special academic projects.
- Colleges of Education Reform: Lobby educational authorities to restructure the teacher-training curriculum, decoupling music from its compressed pairing in the PEMD course, thereby giving music education distinct, rigorous instructional parameters.

d) Cultural Reclamation of the Sacred Soundscape

To ensure music remains deeply meaningful to the Ghanaian student, institutions must actively reclaim local sacred musical heritages.

- Ethnomusicological Inclusion: Intentionally introduce and validate regional indigenous Christian musical expressions such as Konkomba *Kinaachon*, Ewe *Borborbor* and *Agbadza* praise hymns, Ga *Gome* variants, and *Dagaare* liturgical songs within formal

school worship spaces. This intentional mixture of the local and the global reflects contemporary shifts toward a postcolonial approach to worship music across West Africa (Avorgbedor, 2021).

- Church-Community Alliances: Build structural partnerships between schools, local churches, and veteran community musicians to run masterclasses, instrumental mentorships, and faith-based songwriting workshops.
- Vernacular Composition: Encourage students to compose, arrange, and perform original musical pieces in their local languages, using biblical themes and local idioms to foster a robust, contextualised theology.

Conclusion

Reenacting the role of music in contemporary Ghanaian education is both a structural and a spiritual imperative. When students are nurtured through music that engages their intellect, honours their cultural heritage, and speaks directly to their hearts, they transition from passive learners into active disciples and ethical leaders. As Christian educators, the ultimate calling transcends preparing students to clear examinations or secure employment; the true task is to form whole persons, compassionate moral agents, and leaders capable of transforming society with integrity.

Music reaches parts of the human consciousness where conventional lectures cannot, and its lessons remain in the heart long after the final chord has resolved. It must no longer be treated as background noise or ornamentation. Instead, stakeholders across the educational landscape of Ghana must act decisively to restore music to its rightful place as a central pillar of holistic education. As the Psalmist commands in Psalm 98:4, the call to "make a joyful noise" is an invitation to align our entire being with truth. Let our schools sing with conviction once again, harmonising hearts and minds to the glory of God.

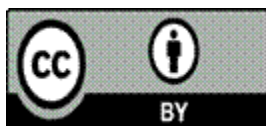
References

- Addaquay, A. (2025). From Classroom to Career in Ghana: Rethinking Music Education in a Culture of Economic Aspiration. *PULSE: Journal for Music and Interdisciplinary Practices*, 6(1), 62-115.
- Adderley, C., Kennedy, M., & Berz, W. (2003). "A Home Away From Home": The World of the High School Music Classroom. *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 51(3), 190–205.

- Adu-Agyem, J., & Osei-Poku, P. (2021). Implementing Creative Arts in Ghanaian Basic Schools: Pedagogical Hurdles and Classroom Realities. *Journal of African Educational Studies*, 12(1), 34–48.
- Agawu, K. (2003). *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions*. Routledge.
- Agordoh, A. A. (2005). *African Music: Traditional and Contemporary*. Nova Science Publishers.
- Agordoh, A. A. (2021). *Choral Music and Worship Practices in Modern Ghana*. Accra: SonLife Press.
- Amuah, J. A. (2013). A survey of choral art music performance scenes in Ghana. Online International Journal of Arts and Humanities, 2(10), 242-247.
- Aning, B. (1975). *The Role of Music in Ghanaian Education*. Legon: University of Ghana.
- Avorgbedor, D. (2021). Re-sounding the Sacred: Intersections of Indigenous Instruments and Christian Worship in West Africa. *African Musicology Today*, 5(2), 112–129.
- Carney, S. (2022). Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education: by UNESCO, Paris, UNESCO, 2021, 186 pages, ISBN 978-92-3-100478-0 (Vol. 58, No. 4, pp. 568-569). Routledge.
- Dordzro, J. D. Y. (2023). Adaptation of indigenous approaches to music pedagogy: Insights from Ghanaian music education. *African Music*, 11(2), 113–134.
- Eisner, E. W. (2003). The arts and the creation of mind. *Language arts*, 80(5), 340-344.
- Emielu, A. (2020). *Music and Christian Worship in Africa*. Ibadan: Kraft Books.
- Essel, H. Q., & Amissah, J. K. (2022). Arts Under Siege: Navigating the Marginalization of Visual and Performing Arts Electives in Ghanaian Secondary Education. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 89, 102–115.
- Fiagbedzi, E. (2017). "Kekeli Nedo!": The Influence of the Church on Musical Practices in Ghana. *Ghana Studies*, 20(1), 70-92.
- Flolu, E. J., Dzansi-McPalm, M. P., & Awoyemi, M. O. (2007). Education in Ghana. *Challenges for the 21st Century*, 1.
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. Basic Books.
- Garrido, S., Dunne, L., & Saarikallio, S. (2020). Using Music for Mental Health Regulation in Adolescents: A Systematic Review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 556–572.

- Habibi, A., Damasio, A., & Damasio, H. (2022). Childhood Musical Training Induces Long-Term Functional Changes in Auditory and Executive Brain Networks. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 42(15), 3120–3135.
- Hallam, S. (2010). The Power of Music: Its Impact on the Intellectual, Social and Personal Development of Children and Young People. *International Journal of Music Education*, 28(3), 269–289.
- Hargreaves, D. J., & North, A. C. (1997). *The Social Psychology of Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Juslin, P. N., & Sloboda, J. A. (Eds.). (2010). *Handbook of Music and Emotion: Theory, Research, Applications*. Oxford University Press.
- Koelsch, S. (2014). *Brain and Music*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Komabu, W., & Dawson, N. A. (2024). The Future of Music Theory and Composition Education in Ghana: An Advocacy for Instructional Pedagogy Centred on African Musical Arts. *Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa*, 21(2), 87-110.
- Kponyoh, E. E., & Dzansi, S. (2024). Easing Teacher Anxiety in Creative Arts Classrooms: A Study of Continuing Professional Development Impact. *Ghana Journal of Teacher Professional Development*, 8(1), 15–29.
- Kraus, N., & White-Schwoch, T. (2020). The argument for music education. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1464(1), 1–10.
- McFerran, K. S., Garrido, S., & Saarikallio, S. (2010). A Critical Interpretive Synthesis of the Literature Linking Music and Adolescent Mental Health. *Youth & Society*, 43(4), 1246–1280.
- Mensah, E. (2010). The Role of Music in Holistic Education in Ghana. *Ghana Journal of Education and Teaching*, 6(2), 45–54.
- Mensah, S. (2021). *Teacher competence in the teaching and learning of creative arts in the primary school* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Education, Winneba).
- Ministry of Education. (2019). *Curriculum Framework for Basic Education*. Accra: NaCCA.
- Moreno, S., Bialystok, E., Barac, R., Schellenberg, E. G., Cepeda, N. J., & Chau, T. (2011). Short-Term Music Training Enhances Verbal Intelligence and Executive Function. *Psychological Science*, 22(11), 1425–1433.
- Nketia, J. H. K. (1974). *The Music of Africa*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

- Ogunrinade, D. O. (2022). Decolonizing the Music Curriculum in Sub-Saharan Africa: Frameworks, Methods, and Trajectories. *West African Journal of Arts Education*, 14(3), 88–101.
- Palmer, P. J. (1993). *To Know as We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey*. HarperOne.
- Richerme, L. K. (2022). The hidden neoliberalism of CASEL's social emotional learning framework: Concerns for equity. *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, (232), 7-25.
- Schellenberg, E. G. (2005). Music and Cognitive Abilities. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 14(6), 317–320.
- Shek, D. T., Chau, G. C., & Lee, B. M. (2025). Development of 21st-century skills: A comprehensive analysis based on the OECD learning compass 2030. In *Promoting Holistic Development in University Students* (pp. 89-118). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- Taguma, M., & Frid, A. (2024). Curriculum frameworks and visualisations beyond national frameworks: Alignment with the OECD Learning Compass 2030.
- The Holy Bible (NRSV)*. Colossians 3:16; Exodus 15:20-21; 1 Samuel 16:23; Psalm 98:4.
- Wesley, J. (1761). *Preface to Sacred Melody*.
- Westermeyer, P. (1998). *Te Deum: The Church and Music*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Wolf, A., Launay, J., & Dunbar, R. I. (2021). Shared Music-Making Promotes Prosocial Behavior and Social Cohesion among Group Members: Meta-Analytic Trends. *Behavioral Sciences*, 11(4), 49–63.
- World Health Organization. (2022). *World mental health report: Transforming mental health for all*. World Health Organization.



2026 by the Authors. This Article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)